(vi) reduction in staff strength in India and abroad and (vii) abolition of several posts of India based officers abroad in the various departments.

Setting up of Aviation Security Force

157. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the measures taken to make Indian skies safer for air travel keeping in view the terrorist attacks in die United States; and

(b) the action taken to set up the special Aviation Security Force at an early date?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) The following measures have been taken to strengthen security at the airports in order to prevent hijackings and other unlawful interference with civil aviation operations:—

(i) Deployment of Sky Marshals on all routes of scheduled airlines at random basis.

(ii) Deployment of Central Industrial Security Force (CIS F) at all operational airports in a timebound manner.

(iii) Deployment of Quick Reaction Teams at major airports

(iv) Ladder point security check of passengers and their hand baggage made mandatory.

(b) CISF has now been entrusted with the responsibility of airport security.

Use of old Aircraft on Kolkata-Ne Region Routes

158. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION - be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Aircrafts now utilized in North-Eastem Region from Kolkata are old and not up to the mark/properly serviceable;

(b) whether Government have not received the information of frequent happening of disturbance to the passengers on this route from Kolkata-Imphal *via* Silchar/Aizwal; and

(c) the measures taken up for changing the existing aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) All aircrafts operating in the North-Eastem region from Kolkata are safe, airworthy and serviceable. Average age of aircrafts plying used in North-East region is approximately 10.5 years.

(b) and (c) Alliance Air operates three flights per week on the route Kolkata/ Silchar/Imphal and return and also three flights per week on route Kolkata/ Aizwal/Imphal and return. During July to September, 2001, only 1.92% of these flights were delayed Ex-Kolkata and Ex-Imphal, while 50.33% of flights were delayed/cancelled due to adverse weather, airport restrictions, consequen- tial and miscellaneous reasons not within the control of the airline.

Bail-Out Plan for Aviation Sector

159. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines/Air India and other private taxi operators have submitted a bail-out plan to Government seeking'certain concessions due to recession in air travel;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government to various demands put forward by these airlines?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) Jet Airways only have submitted a proposal seeking several relief measures to tide over the serious economic problems and recessionary conditions being faced by the aviation sector. Some of the important measures are;

(i) Indemnity from the government to cover the additional financial burden due to Insurance surcharge levied by Insurance companies;

(ii) Retention of 50% of Inland Air Travel Tax (IATT) by the airlines;

(iii) 30% relief in Category U & HA operations;

(iv) Exemption from Customs Duty on import of aircraft and engines;

(v) Extensionof the limit of 4% Central Salex Tax onAviationlurbineFuelto all aircraft operations;

(vi) Permission to hedge fuel prices; and